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ABSTRACT

This report provides a review of programs authorized under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and an overview of potential reauthorization issues, as the second session of the 103rd Congress considers revisions to these programs. The Infants and Toddlers Program (Part H of IDEA) provides formula grants to participating States to assist in establishment and operation of early intervention systems for children under the age of 3. Funds are allocated to States based on the number of children in the general population under the age of 3. As of September 30, 1993, 40 States had fully phased in their early intervention systems. Since fiscal year 1987, appropriations have increased an estimated 302 percent after adjusting for inflation. Congress may turn to health care reform as an option for funding the program as it evolves into full service delivery. The Discretionary Grants Programs (Parts C through G of IDEA) authorize special education research, demonstrations, technical assistance, and personnel training. Since fiscal year 1980, appropriations have decreased an estimated seven percent after adjusting for inflation. Thirty-seven percent of the appropriation is for personnel development. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis. In determining reauthorization, the roles that the discretionary grant programs may play in special education reform will be considered. (JDD)

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Individuals With Disabilities Education Act: Reauthorization Overview

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The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) authorizes several programs to support and improve the education of children and youth with disabilities. The infants and toddlers and discretionary grant programs are authorized through FY 1994. The General Education Provisions Act has automatically extended these programs at least through FY 1995. Consideration of revisions to these programs is anticipated to begin in the second session of the 103d Congress. This report provides an overview of these programs and potential reauthorization issues.

Background

Infants and Toddlers Program. Part H of IDEA authorizes the program to provide formula grants to participating States to assist them in the establishment and operation of early intervention systems for children with disabilities under the age of 3. Early intervention systems have **not** yet been fully implemented in every State. Under the implementation timetable outlined in part H, States have been allowed to slowly phase in their early intervention systems since the program's inception. Currently, States have until September 30, 1994, to have their early intervention systems fully in place. As of September 30, 1993, **40 States** have fully phased in their early intervention systems. One State--Mississippi--has opted not to participate in the program at this time. The program was established by the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1986, P.L. 99-457. The last reauthorization was the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1991, P.L. 102-119.

Discretionary Grant Programs. Parts C through G of IDEA authorize a variety of programs to support special education research, demonstrations, technical assistance, and personnel training. The programs are collectively referred to as the discretionary grant or special purpose programs. Among the programs are the following: deaf-blindness; serious emotional disturbance; severe disabilities; early childhood education; secondary and transitional services; postsecondary education; innovation and development; media and captioning services; technology applications; special studies; personnel development; parent training; clearinghouses; and regional resource centers. The oldest of these programs dates back to 1958; the newest back to 1990. The last reauthorization was the Education of the Handicapped Act Amendments of 1990, P.L. 101-476.

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Funding

Infants and Toddlers Program. The FY 1994 appropriation is $253,152,000. The FY 1995 budget request is $325,125,000. Since FY 1987, the first year of funding for the program, appropriations have increased an estimated 302 percent after adjusting for inflation. Funds are allocated to participating States based on the number of children in the general population under the age of 3.

Discretionary Grant Programs. The FY 1994 appropriation is $249,729,000. The FY 1995 budget request is for the same amount. Since FY 1980, appropriations have decreased an estimated 7 percent after adjusting for inflation. The single largest discretionary grant program in terms of funding is personnel development with an FY 1994 appropriation of $91,339,000. This accounts for 37 percent of the appropriation for the discretionary grant programs. Funds are awarded on a competitive basis.

Services

Infants and Toddlers Program. Infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families in States with a fully implemented early intervention system are entitled to a range of early intervention and support services. Services are provided according to the child's individualized family service plan (IFSP). In 1991, about 172,000 infants and toddlers with disabilities were served.

Discretionary Grant Programs. The various programs provide, among other activities, a range of special education and early intervention services to selected children and youth. No data are available on the number of children and youth served.

Reauthorization Issues

Infants and Toddlers Program. Among the issues that may be considered is whether financing of early intervention services will be part of **health care reform**. A federally funded evaluation of the progress of States in phasing in their early intervention systems found that alternative financing options must be developed if the program is to evolve into the next phase of full service delivery. Congress may turn to health care reform as one of those options. Although the outlines of health care reform are still taking shape as different approaches are debated, it appears that early intervention services could be funded under several alternatives. For instance, under President Clinton's proposed *Health Security Act*, early intervention services might be incorporated into the new program for poor children providing services comparable to those now available under Medicaid's Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment (EPSDT) program, or into the new long-term care program covering home and community-based services for disabled persons.

Discretionary Grant Programs. Among the issues that may be considered is how the programs foster **school reform** in special education. Congress is now considering the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* school reform legislation. It is intended, in part, to establish a framework through which Federal education programs further systemic reform. The roles that the discretionary grant programs may play in special education reform include: (1) training regular and special education personnel in classroom practices and techniques to integrate disabled and nondisabled students; (2) developing appropriate methods of assessment to monitor the progress of disabled children and youth towards the National Education Goals; (3) supporting innovative experiments in serving disabled pupils; and (4) facilitating the dissemination of best practices to school personnel.